TURN THE LEAF AND GLEAN THE FRUIT
AM
ADDISON CAIRNS MIZNER
His Book
NO
DATE

Addison Mizner

FOUR TAPESTRIES

after

TENIERS THE YOUNGER

woven at the

WERNIERS LOOMS, LILLE

about 1700

By Dr. Phyllis Ackerman

THE SOCIETY OF THE FOUR
PALM BEACH
FLORIDA

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FOREWORD

THE sale of these tapestries presented an unique opportunity for America to secure a celebrated group, for while occasionally Teniers "type" tapestries come on the market, it is indeed rare to see a single original tapestry from the loom of the celebrated Werniers and which is signed by Teniers.

The opinion of many experts is to the effect that this group of tapestries are of the finest quality. As stated in the following expertise by the well known tapestry authority, Dr. Ackermann, the weave, coloring and condition of each tapestry are of highest perfection.

EXTRACT

". . . . the series is important, first because it is a perfect example of the finest grade of work done on these looms that specialized in Teniers designs, with a lavish use of silk, the finest stringing of the warps and the most careful attention to every detail; second, because one piece bears the signature of Teniers himself, an important detail because many designs in imitation of the Teniers style were used and these, like all imitations, were inferior in both spirit and execution; and third and especially because of their perfect preservation, the absolute perfection of the colors which have not lost one bit of their original brilliance and sheen and the accurate tension of the weave which shows no sign of pull or pucker."

Signed: DR. PHYLLIS ACKERMAN

THE ARTIST

DAVID TENIERS, the Younger was born in Antwerp in 1610. He probably worked first with his father whose style he carried on and perfected. He was admitted to the Corporation of St. Luke in 1633 and was Dean of the Guild in 1644. He was an intimate friend of Rubens and married Anne Bruegel the daughter of Jan Bruegel, Rubens' pupil and associate. He became painter to the Governor, Archduke Leopold William who gave him many gifts and many commissions and made him Director of his Picture Gallery at Brussels. His successors Don Juan of Austria confirmed and continued the appointment and his father, Philip IV of Spain, was a great admirer of Teniers' work and acquired many of his pictures which are now in the Prado at Madrid. In 1650 Teniers went to live at Brussels, buying the country house at Perck which appears in many of his pictures but he retained his connections at Antwerp, helping to found the Antwerp Academy of Arts in 1663.

Over a thousand of Teniers' paintings have been identified and there are probably many more that have not yet been attributed to him. Most of his Kirmess scenes were painted in the forties. The earlier Kirmesses almost always show a little party of the neighborhood gentry looking on at the revelry or even participating in it but later, as in the two in this series, the gentry was left out, perhaps because he was getting an increasing sense of noblesse oblige which lead him to feel that their presence was beneath their class dignity. For in the later years of his life he applied for ad-

mission to the ranks of the noblesse declaring his family to be "honorable originaire de Haynaut, d'Ath." The application was favorably received but the admission would carry with it the condition that he no longer paint for remuneration and so the matter was dropped.

THE WEAVER

TENIERS' paintings became very popular as tapestry cartoons and were used by a number of ateliers in Brussels but there is one shop whose work in translating Teniers' scenes onto the loom stands alone for quality and perfection and these tapestries are unmistakably the output of that shop. This atelier was founded in Lille about 1688 by a Brussels master weaver, Jan de Melter, and carried on after 1700 by his son-in-law, Wilhelm Werniers, also a Brussels trained man. A number of signed pieces from this shop have come down to us and they are distinguished by the delicacy of detail, the freshness of color and especially by the beautiful handling of foliage and plants. Indeed the very individual perfection of the leaf drawing is the diagnostic mark of the work of this shop, the characteristic which enables one to assert conclusively that this series was woven on those looms.

Aside from its obvious beauty and charm, and the inexhaustible interest of the compositions as records of the life of the time, the series is important first because it is a perfect example of the finest grade of work done on these looms that specialized in Teniers' designs, with a lavish use of silk, the finest stringing of the warps and the most careful attention to every detail; second because one piece bears the signature of Teniers himself, an important detail because many designs in imitation of the Teniers' style were used and these, like all imitations, were inferior in both spirit and execution; and third and especially because of their perfect preservation, the absolute perfection of the colors which have not lost one bit of their original brilliance and sheen and the accurate tension of the weave which shows no sign of pull or pucker.

Signed: Dr. Phyllis Ackerman

OBJECT

TENIERS is famous for his illustrations of peasant life in his native Flanders, especially the sports and recreations of the farmers and their families. The robust, sanguine Flemish countryman played quite as hard as he worked, with a whole souled boisterousness that was unconsciously picturesque. Of these Flemish peasant recreations, the most important were the Kirmesses and of these Teniers painted a number of noted pictures.

The Kirmess was originally a day on which a special Mass was celebrated to commemorate the founding of the most important church in the village. The rest of the day was then set aside as a holiday. By degrees the holiday and its merrymaking came to be the most important aspect of the occasion until the original significance was taken account of only in the name of the day and in the gayly painted banner of the Saint which was flown from the Inn where the festival was held. Thus we have in one of these tapestries St. Sebastian's Day and in the other St. Adrian's Day.

Frequently these Kirmesses were combined with the remnant of old pagan festivals still celebrated by the villagers. The coming of Spring, the arrival of Summer and the Harvest were all important events in the life of a farming people and as such were commemorated with appropriate rites the origin of which dated back to Roman and even more remote stages of European civilization. Of many of the customs connected with these festivities and ceremonies the celebrants themselves had forgotten the meaning but

they were repeated generation after generation with only minor changes and elaborations. Thus St. Sebastian's Day is combined with May Day and it is celebrated with the old, old ceremony of the May Pole.

St. Adrian, whose fête day came in September and is illustrated in the second tapestry of the series, was an especially important Saint in Flanders. His origins were remote enough, he was a soldier in the guard of the Emperor Gallerius Maximus, and so is always depicted in the uniform of a legionary, but his relics were supposed to be cherished in the convent of St. Adrian at Grammont and so he became of particular interest to Flemings. His fête was always very riotous for he had been adopted as the patron of the Flemish Brewers.

Teniers as the illustrator of peasant carousals is the culmination of a tradition that began with Jerome Bosch, found its first very great expression in the work of Bruegel the Elder, himself a peasant and given to returning to the revels of his class the better to get their spirit, and in the Seventeenth Century is reflected the roisterers of Frans Hals and the ribald scenes of Jan Steen. Teniers combined with his genius for genre a sensitive appreciation for atmosphere and delicate composition in landscape, a manner that found its greatest perfection in the work of his great contemporary Ruisdael, and accomplished skill in rendering still life groups which almost always are introduced in a minor rôle in his compositions. Thus he combines and so in a sense epitomises the major trends of Northern painting of his own and the immediately preceding centuries.

RELATED PIECES

A KIRMESS at the Crescent Inn which may be the same Inn, seen however from the other side, is in the Painting Gallery at Dresden. The Inn, like most of those which he shows in his Kirmess pictures, was in a village near Antwerp. Another Crescent Inn, evidently in another village, is the scene of the Kirmess of the Imperial Gallery of Vienna. This shows the October Kirmess of St. Michael. Another Kirmess of St. Adrian is in the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam and in this there is a group of a woman helping her husband home almost identical with the similar episode in the St. Adrian's Kirmess in this set of tapestries.

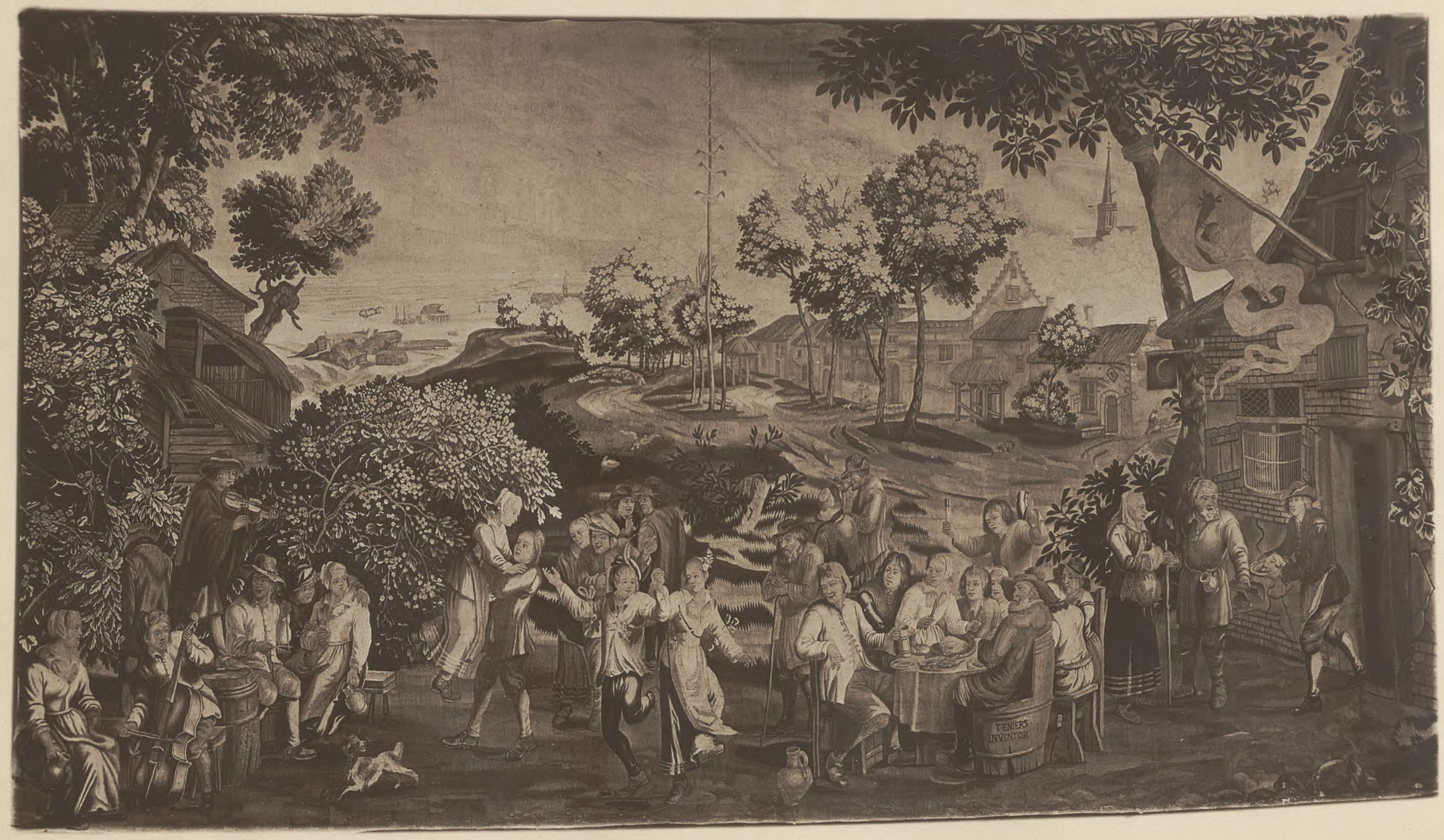
THE SOCIETY OF THE
PALM BEACH
FLORIDA

I

THE MAY KIRMESS

IT IS May Day and the coming of Summer and St. Sebastian's Day are being celebrated together in a great Kirmess at the Crescent Inn near Antwerp. At the left, in front of a thatched barn surrounded by oak trees, is a group of peasant musicians. One man, playing a violin, stands on a barrel. He wears a brown cloak over a blue smock and a blue cap. In front of him sits a cellist playing vigorously. He wears a light blue smock and red breeches. On the other side of the barrel is the triangle player dressed in tan with blue leggings. A pair of rustic lovers sit on a bench beyond the musicians, the woman with a white blouse and yellow apron over a blue petticoat and the man in green smock and blue beret. In the lower left corner another woman in a blue gown over a red petticoat sits on a barrel holding a jug and mug, waiting for the cellist to finish playing to pour him a draft of ale. Another peasant in a vivid crimson smock walks off, his back turned. A young sheep dog trots along in the foreground.

In the center is a group of younger lads and their lasses sporting and dancing. A boy in red coat and leggings and brown breeches tosses into the air a girl dressed in a red blouse and yellow skirt with a white apron over it. In the front of the group another lad in a red coat and long tight blue breeches, a tiny blue beret with a scraggly plume perched rakishly on his head, dances with a young girl in a yellow silk bodice tied with red ribbons and a white apron over a blue skirt. She has been crowned Queen of the May



I—THE MAY KIRMESS

with a chaplet of white blossoms. Immediately behind them another young lout in brown with a red cap is jigging with a girl in brown with a green apron and behind them two stolid peasants stand pulling at their pipes and gossiping, both in brown, one with blue hose.

At the right, the supper table is set and men and women sitting on rough chairs, some made of barrels, crowd about it. In the front, at the left, is a young man in his thirties, moustached, dressed in a blue coat unbuttoned over a white shirt, brown breeches and red hose. He grasps a tall pewter flagon, and a plate of fish is set before him. The next man wears a leather doublet laced over a blue shirt. Perched on his knee is a young woman in blue and white wielding a carving knife over a big joint. Beside her sits a boy in brown, behind him another woman is just visible and above them a youth stands, his blue cap in his hand, his tall mug held aloft, drinking a toast. Two other women sit at one side, one wearing a flashing red cap and a delicate blue gown.

At the far right is the Inn. The walls are of brick, half covered with cracking plaster. The blinds are opened showing the diamond pane windows. A heavy grapevine climbs up the front to the deep eaves of thatch. From an upper window flies the flag of St. Sebastian, a long forked banner with the martyr, tied to his column, painted on it; and from another pole hangs the sign of the Inn, a small blue flag bearing a crescent.

A young man hurries out of the Inn door carrying another joint on a platter. He wears a deep red coat over brown breeches and blue hose, and he has tied an apron hastily about his waist. His broad brimmed hat is turned up on both sides. An elderly couple stand at one side talking, the old man in a yellow smock, a jug slung at his belt, a staff in his hand, and the old woman in blue with red hose, a kerchief over her head and her apron gathered into a bundle around her waist.

In the middle distance is the village green with a pond in the center, wild geese rising from it and beyond that, at the right, the village buildings, charming cottages with thatched roofs, stepped gables, low arched doors and casement blinds. In the center of the green the maypole has been erected, hung with wreaths and fluttering banners. Above the roofs of the houses rises the distant steeple of the Cathedral of Antwerp. The scene is framed at either side with tall trees, the foliage delicately silhouetted against the pale blue sky.

On the barrel is the signature:

TENIERS
INVENTOR

Height 9′2″
Width 15′13¾″

II

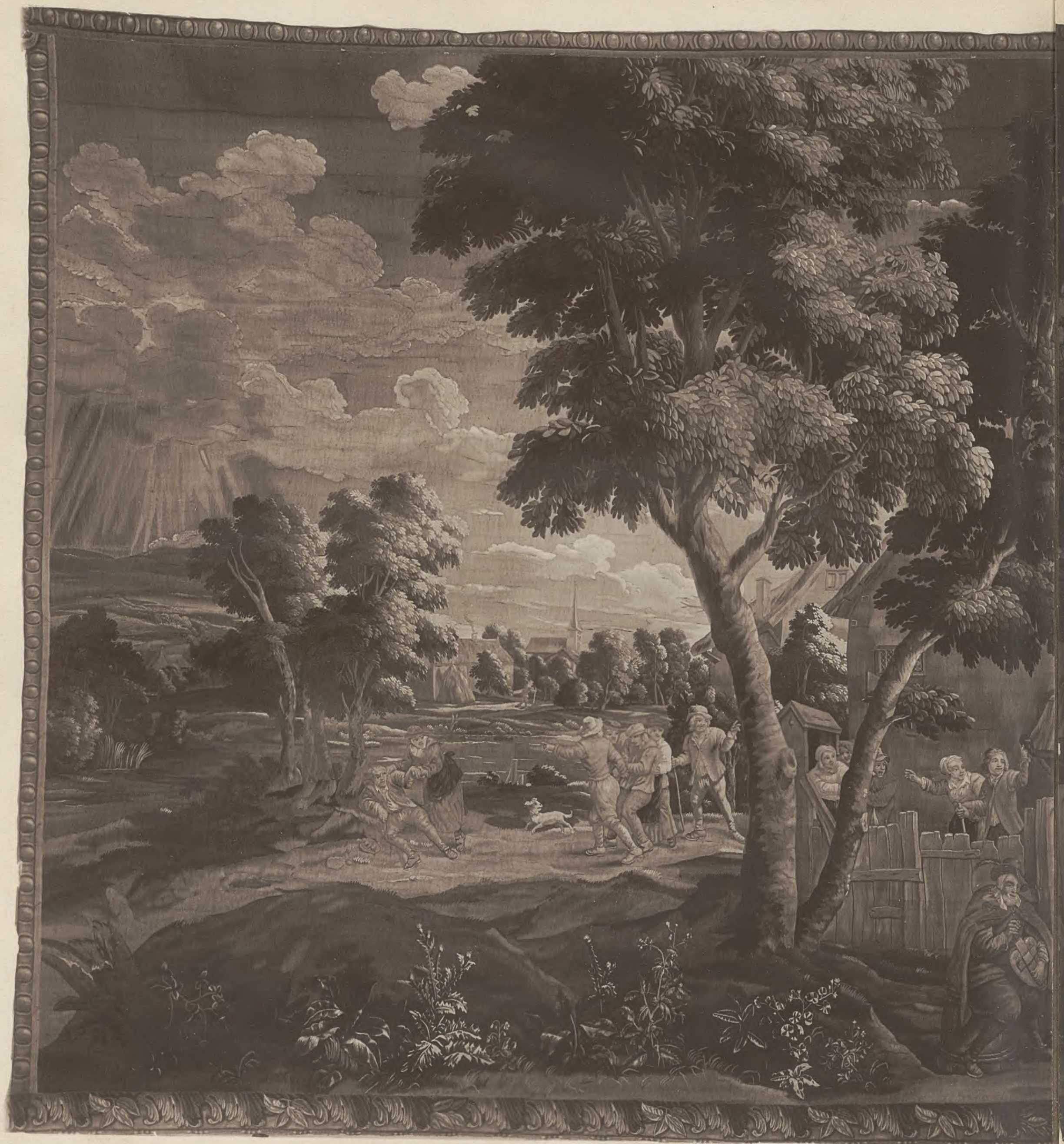
THE SEPTEMBER KIRMESS

ST. ADRIAN'S DAY, the eighth of September, is being commemorated with a Kirmess at the Star Inn. The peasant festivities are at their height. In the right foreground, one group sits roistering around a table. A lad in blue coat and yellow breeches makes love to a woman in yellow silk blouse, blue petticoat and white apron. An older, bearded man beyond him pours for himself another mug of ale. Next to him is another love making couple, the woman in white, the man with a scarlet cap. Two bibulous old men gossips stand in the corner, one clutching his glass of wine, his blue cap tipped over his face; the other, holding his pipe and carrying a jug. He wears a red cap, brown smock and loose green trousers, just such a Belgian peasant as can be seen still down any country road. In front of the table a lad, in white shirt and green breeches, throws himself back, laughing noisily and clapping on the shoulder a woman with red blouse and blue apron over a brown petticoat. At the left of the group a man jeers at the lovers between quaffs at a tall tankard that he holds. He wears a green coat and brown trousers with bright blue socks and his broad brimmed hat is tipped over one eye. Behind the group the heads of several other men and women with red and blue caps can be seen, and a boy, his red cap in his hand, jumps up and down shouting. A young woman in a red blouse leans out of an upper window watching the fun.

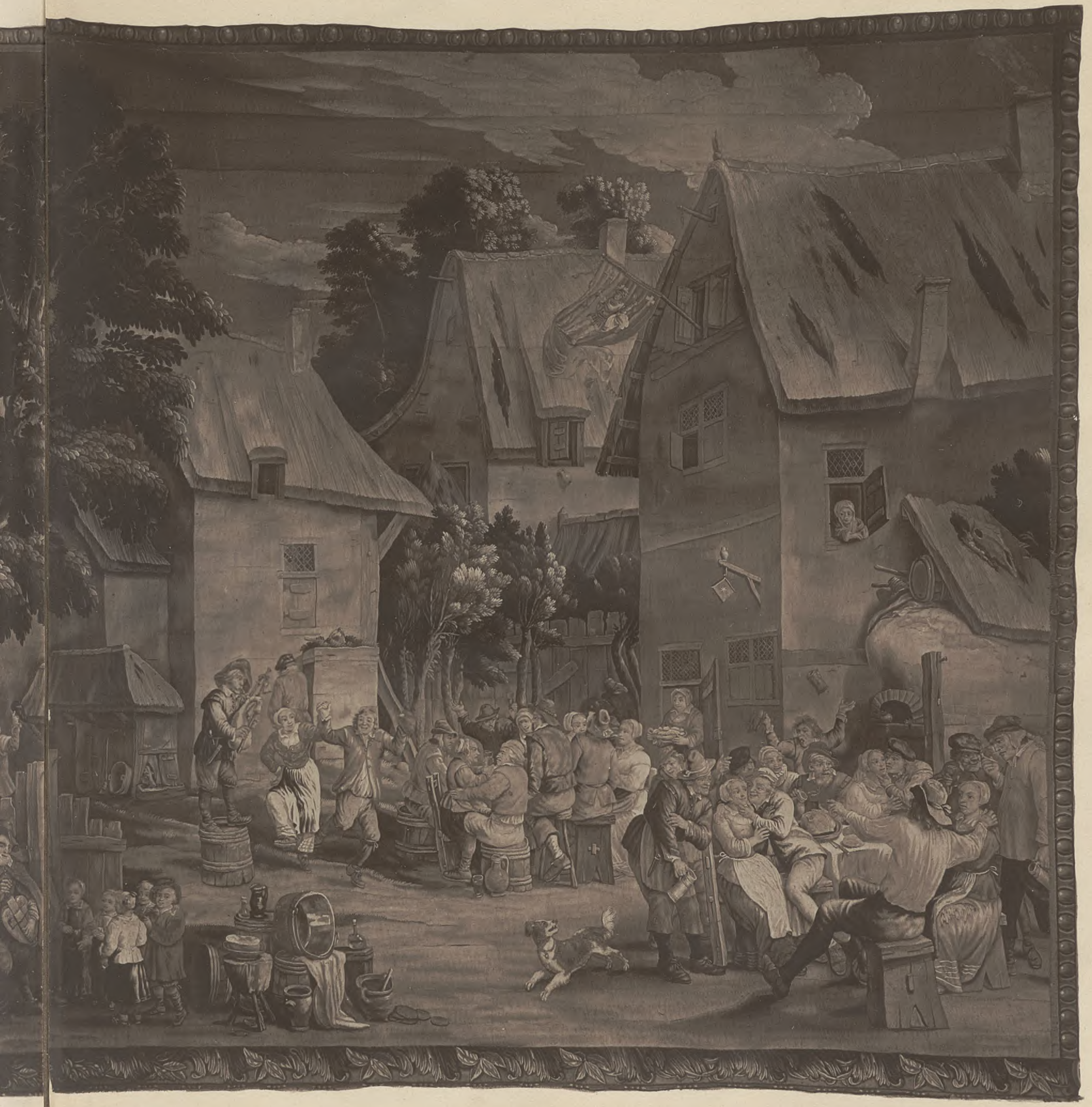
Further back in the Inn is a second party grouped around another table. Three men have their backs turned, one with light red jacket, blue, and one yellow. A jug and a half filled glass of wine rests on the ground beside one of them. At the right and left are women dressed in blue and in white and at the farther side of the board between several other men and women only half seen, a young man in a blue smock rises to drink a toast. A maid servant comes from the kitchen of the Inn, at the right bearing a platter of meat. The sign of the Inn, a square blue flag bearing a crescent, hangs from the wall above and on the bar from which it swings a jug rests, graphic promise of the refreshment within.

At the left of this group a youth and maiden dance to the tune of a piper who stands on an inverted tub. The youth wears a yellow coat, tan breeches and red hose and waves his cap in his hand. The maiden wears a red silk bodice over a white guimp and a blue apron over white petticoat. The piper wears a blue coat and full brown breeches and a rakish brown hat. In the foreground is a pile of boxes, barrels and baskets, with jugs, bottles and pots lying about and a dog runs barking away. The Inn yard is almost encircled by the thatch-roofed buildings of the Inn and by the trees in front and behind them, tall against the deep blue sky. From an attic window is hung the red banner of St. Adrian, the Saint pictured in the body armor and short tunic of a Roman soldier with a bow and arrows in his hands.

Further to the left in the immediate foreground a group of five little children listens to an old man playing an accordion. The old man, dressed all in brown, sits on an upturned tub. One little girl wears a blue apron over a red dress, another blue over yellow and the third is in blue and white. The boys wear plain brown smocks. Beyond this group, behind a low fence, a young couple leaves the festivities, waving good-by. He wears a red coat and blue cap and she is in white blouse and blue skirt.



II—THE SEPTEMBER



TEMBER KIRMESS

Just to the left of the center a great elm tree fills the composition from margin to margin and at the left of that the scene opens out to show a vista of river and lawns and trees with the spire of the village church beyond. A heavy storm is gathering in the sky and the rays of the setting sun are reflected on the clouds. In the middle distance are groups of revellers going home; their clothes make bright spots of red and blue against the rich blues and greens of the landscape. In the immediate foreground are little plants, thistles, a wild strawberry in blossom and fruit, a milk weed and a bitter alum, drawn with marvellously delicate accuracy.

The piece is surrounded by a narrow border simulating carved wood with the egg and dart pattern and scrolls.

Height 9′4½″
Width 19′9″

III

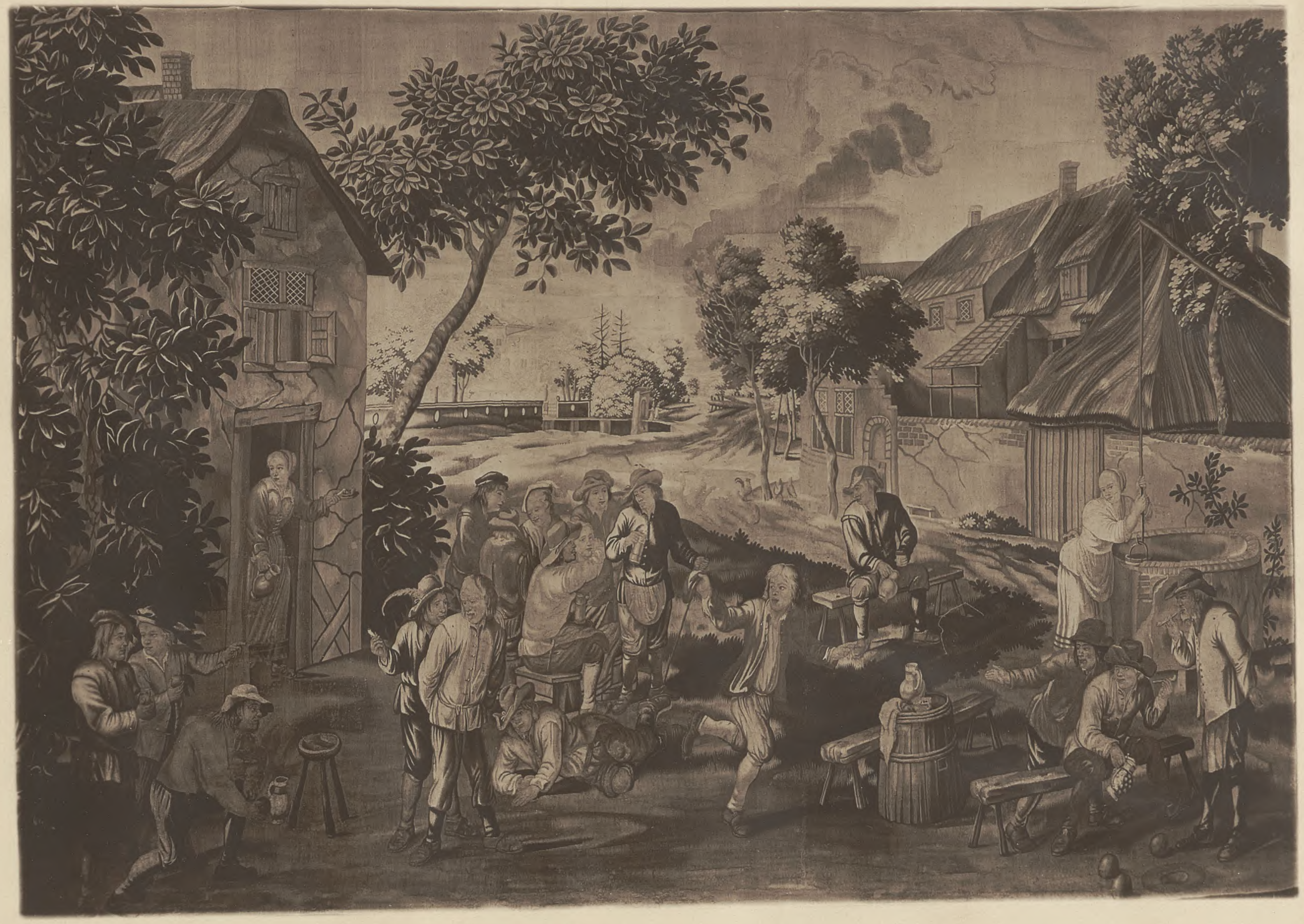
THE GAME OF BOWLS

A GROUP of peasants is gathered in the yard of an Inn playing a game of bowls in which the balls are rolled, not to knock down pins, but to come as near as possible into a pocket, a game that is a combination, as it were, of bowls as we know it and billiards. At the left three men are about to play. One, stripped to the skin above the waist and with blue trousers, crouches, ready to roll his ball. The other two stand behind him waiting, one in blue smock, brown breeches and red cap, the other with red smock and blue cap. At the right, at the other end of the course, three men are gathered to judge the result. One, seated on a bench a blue jug held between his knees, a pipe just taken out of his mouth, has a yellow coat and red hose and wears a broad brimmed brown hat. An older man smoking a pipe, stands, his eyes fixed on the players. He wears a yellow coat and blue breeches with an apron over them. A third, estimating the course with his hand, has a red hat, brown coat and blue breeches. Behind them a servant maid in yellow and white draws up a bucket of water from the well.

In the center some of the peasants are watching the game while others are drinking and talking. One pair, a young man all in blue with a jaunty feather in his hat, and an older man with yellow coat and blue breeches, is evidently laying a bet. Another man, all in brown, lies on the ground the better to watch the play. A third, with bright red coat and cap and yellow breeches, runs along to follow the ball. On an inverted tub beside him is a napkin, jug and box that almost constitute a still life group.

Behind the two laying the bet, is a group of gossipers, each with his flagon. A man in brown is seated in profile, another in blue is seated with his back turned and one standing together, are in red, and blue and red respectively. To one side, at the right, another man in blue sits alone, pouring out his ale. At either side are the Inn buildings. A maid in red with a white apron emerges from the door at the left and there is a low cluster of thatched roofs and walls half covered with lined plaster at the right. A few chickens peck about the yard and beyond is a hilly landscape with trees.

Height 9′6½″
Width 13′3″



III—THE GAME OF BOWLS

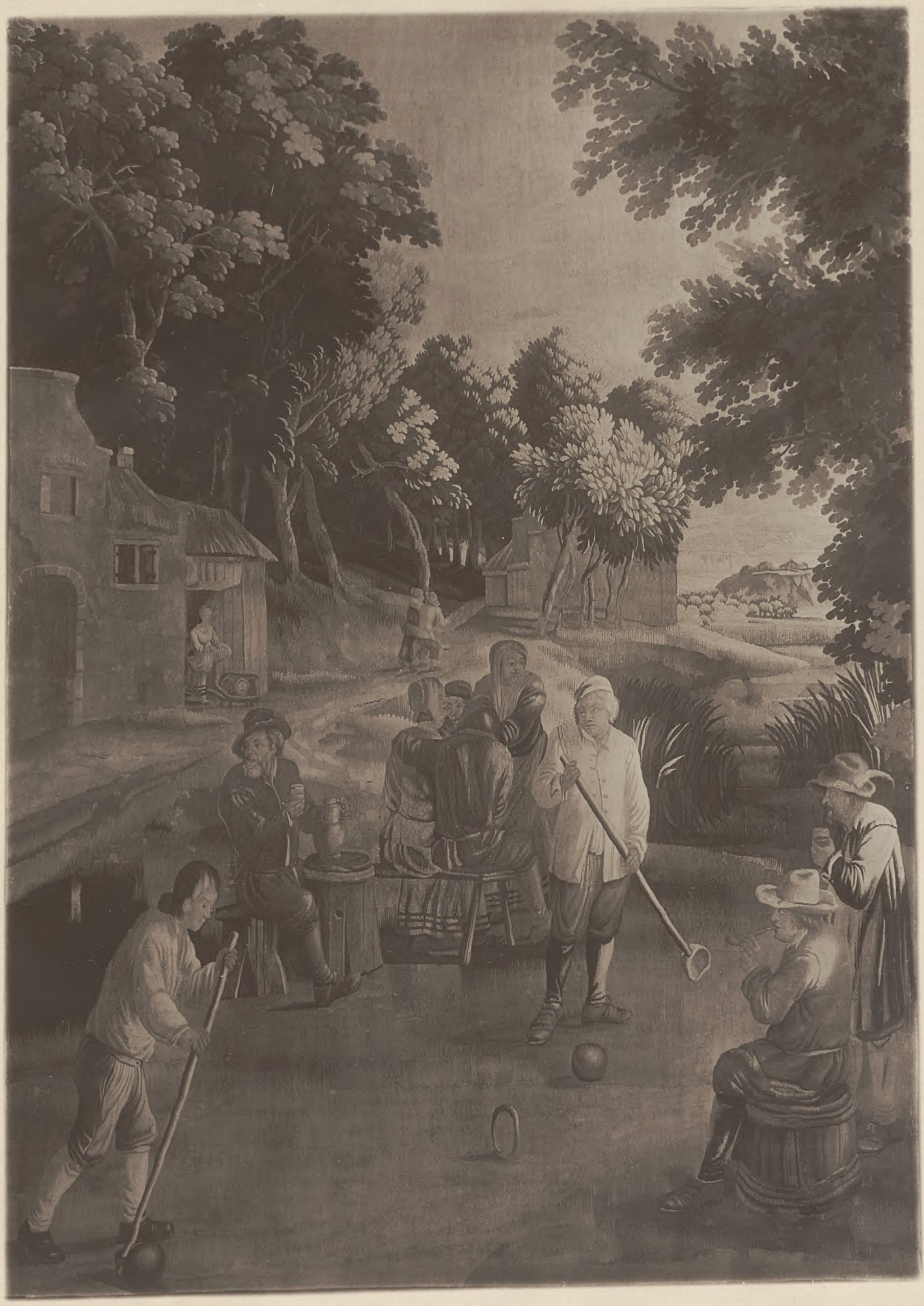
IV

THE CROQUET PLAYERS

TWO peasants are playing croquet while several others look on. The wicket is a horseshoe and the mallets are spoon shaped. In the left foreground a peasant, all in brown, is about to shoot for the wicket through which his adversary has already passed. The other boy, also in brown, stands beyond, his mallet poised. At the right, an older man in red coat, brown breeches and blue leggings sits on a tub smoking. Behind him stands a bearded shepherd in a long blue tunic and broad brimmed felt hat, his glass of red wine in his hand. At the left, beyond the wicket, a bearded man in red coat and brown trousers turns away from pouring his ale to watch the shot, while two affectionate couples are oblivious to the game. A lad in red embraces a maiden in red blouse and blue skirt and another maiden in blue stands beyond them beside her lover.

At the left is the Inn, a servant standing in the door. A youth and his lass leave by the inn path, arm about shoulder. Most of the vista is interrupted by the thick growth of trees at the left, but just a glimpse of a rushy river winding off into the meadows can be caught at the right.

Height 9′5″
Width 6′11½″



IV—THE CROQUET PLAYERS

DO NOT CIRCULATE